

## SAFETY FACTS: EMPLOYEE FALLS

Falls on the same level and falls from elevation represent about 25 percent of the total workers' compensation claims in any calendar year in New Mexico. Floors should be maintained in good repair and free of rough or slippery materials. Oil, grease, and water should be wiped up immediately, and absorbents used when necessary.

To prevent slipping on wooden floors around machinery, rubber mats or other non-slip materials should be used.

During wet weather, tile, marble, and polished concrete floors should be covered with a non-slip matting. Rugs should be in good condition-free of curled edges or tears.

Keep passageways and aisles clear of all materials. Don't leave tools on floors. Pick them up. Aisles should be marked with paint or similar markings and kept clear.

Outside yards and walking areas should be kept free of debris, ice, and snow. All holes should be filled in, and the grounds kept reasonably level.

Stairways should be in uniform, solid construction, with suitable handrails and landings. Treads should have a non-slip surface, and risers should be the same height. Stairs should be kept clean, dry, and free of obstructions. There should be sufficient stairways to prevent over-crowding, and they should be well lighted. Employees should be instructed to hold on the handrails and walk, don't run, on stairs.

Ladders should be of standard construction and in good condition. They should be provided with non-slip safety feet, and should be of sufficient length for the use intended. If possible, a helper should hold the ladder for the person working on it, and should assist in raising and lowering tools/materials.

All scaffolding should be erected by experienced personnel who are fully knowledgeable of the requirements of OSHA 1910.28.

Employees working on suspended or supported equipment, intended to provide access to the face of a building, must be protected by a personal fall arrest system.

Employees working on vehicle-mounted elevating and/or rotating platforms must be secured to the boom or basket with a body belt and lanyard.

Pits, vats, ditches, and any other floor openings should also be guarded by standard railings or a cover. Adequate walkways should be provided whenever it is necessary to cross a ditch. The walkway should also have standard railings.

### SUMMARY

Review current federal, state and local standards regarding walking and working surfaces, and be sure your business conforms to these regulations. By following these suggestions and the current standards, the number of falls can be greatly reduced.

### REFERENCES

OSHA 29 CFR Part 1910.22, General Requirements

OSHA 29 CFR Part 1910.67, Vehicle-Mounted Elevating and Rotating Work Platforms

OSHA 29 CFR Part 1910.66, Powered Platforms for Building Maintenance